PORTFOLIO

jefferson xia

artist statement

While I strongly believe in the fundamentals of art, I also value the expression of my own ideas. I need a place to incubate ideas rather than have them forced on me. When I first became serious about art, I joined a studio that focused on art fundamentals. Over time, although I saw improvements in my skill and began to produce pieces that captivated others, I failed to see myself in it. I felt this way because the work was created by following, rather than leading. But as I began to explore on my own to define my creations, the guiding rails ended. I was forced to find my own way. I started to do more and more research, find materials and fabrication techniques, and make them unique to me. Now, whenever I start a new project, I let my passion for working with new materials support my steps into the unknown. These pieces are mine, the process, the idea, the errors. I find the independence to be liberating, I can see myself in the work.

01/
fine art works

10/
summer program works

17/
independent works

structural assimilation

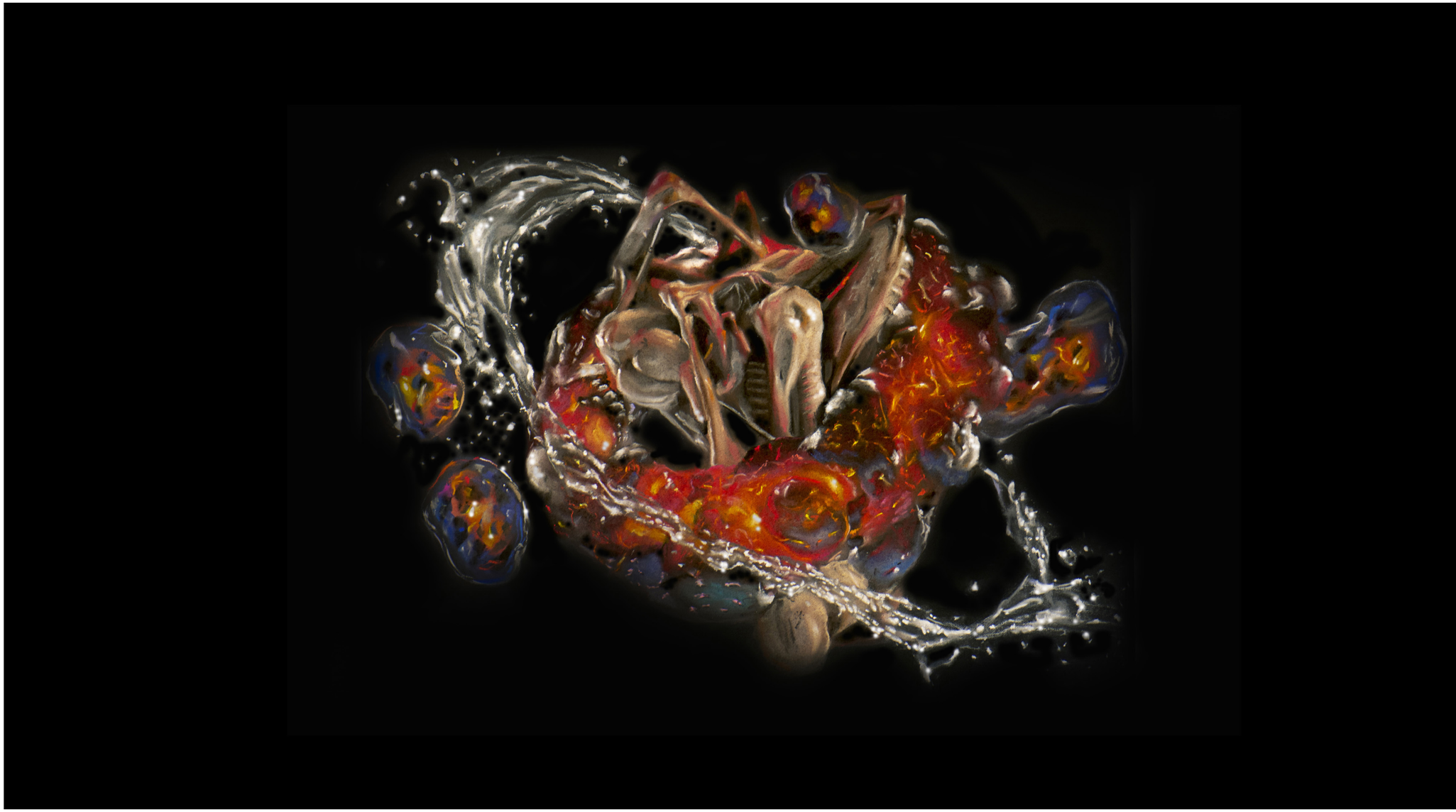
Buildings can drain away the ability of a landscape to sustain life. To show the result of this artificial assimilation, I chose to render a scene of a depleted site fostering the parasitic structures that jut out of the surface; the bones of the skull reflect the lifeless host. The surrounding organisms signify neighboring plots of land, unaware of the spore-like expansion of the buildings. This exercise was intended to advance my ability to build a narrative through a still image.

20" x 28", pen and marker

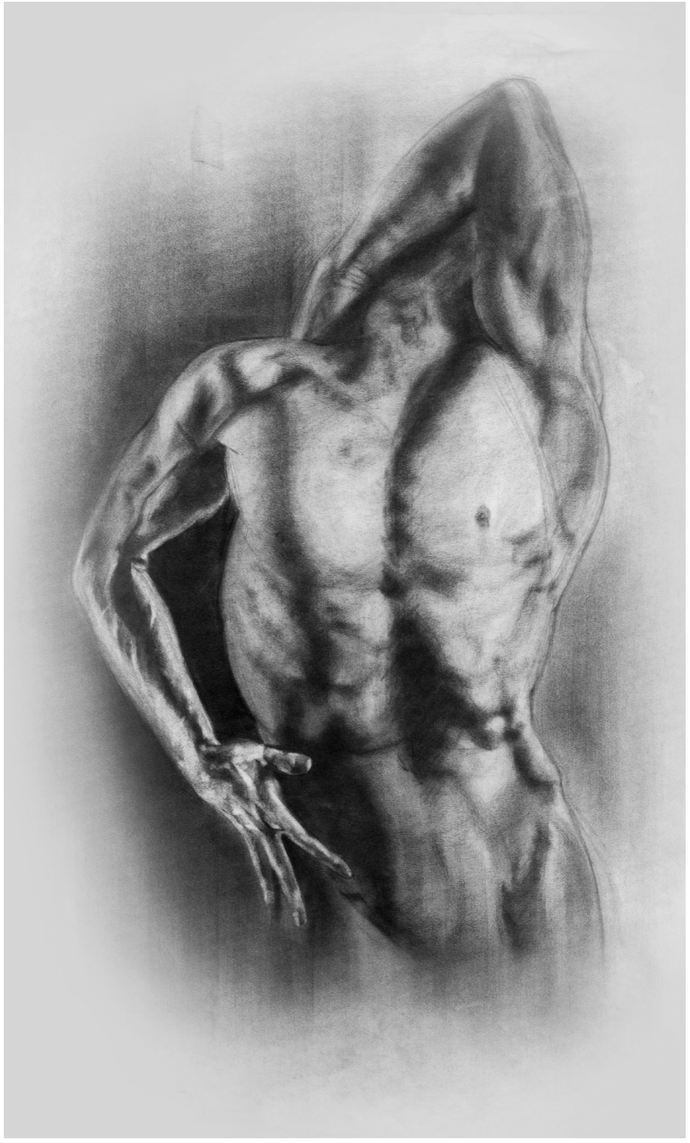
48” x 80”, pastel

formal abstraction

As a way to further enhance my skill and understanding in pastel drawings, I decided to portray life-like “creatures” through the use of color and a multitude of textures. When looking at these abstracted organisms, minor connections can be made, misleading viewers into a sense of familiarity. But as a whole, they remain a mystery.



22” x 35”, pastel 03



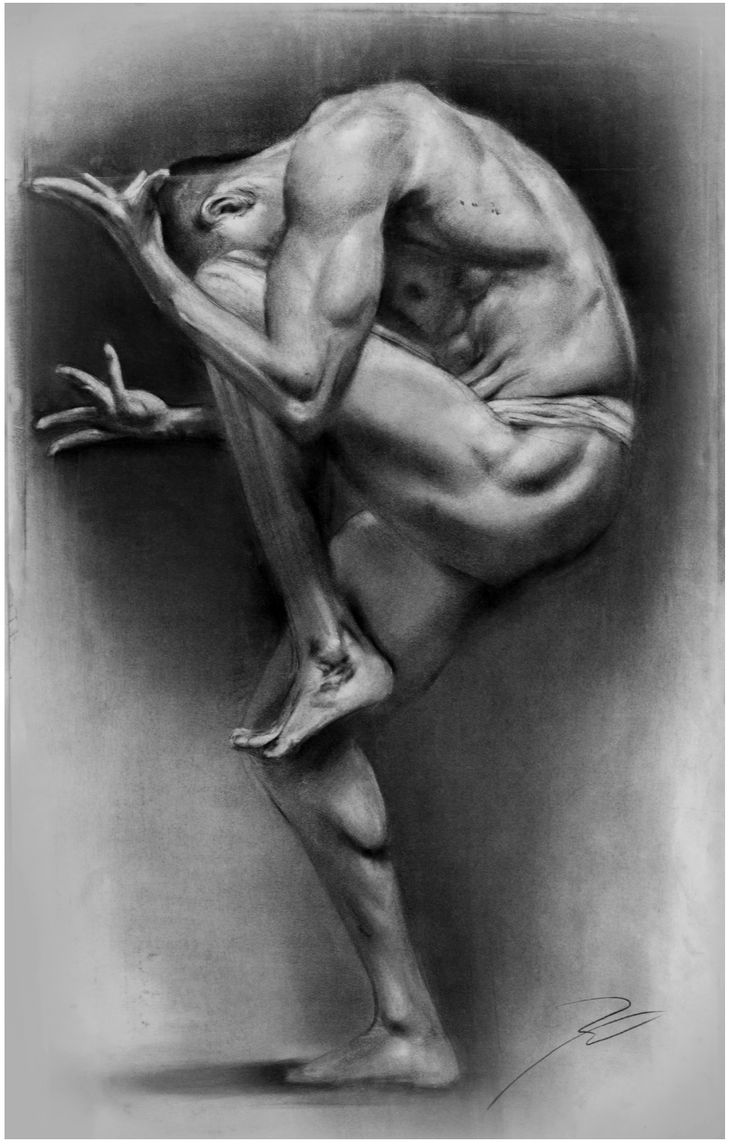


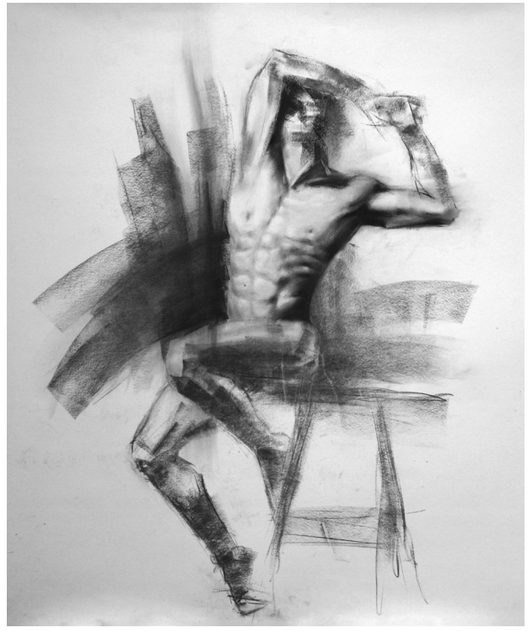
figure drawings

Figure drawings from reference photos. These drawings are the culmination of the hundreds of hours that I have dedicated to building up my art discipline over the past 2 years. They are also representative of the massive hurdle I have crossed. With no background in art, I am still amazed I've made it to this point. As my studio instructor says, "To truly understand the hard work of artists, you must first go through the journey of figure drawing." Though I found it somewhat tedious in the beginning, this training has become fundamental to my artistic understanding and belief

42" x 24", charcoal (all)

variations on figure drawing

Successfully grasping the technicality of figure drawing, I wanted to express more of my individuality in figure drawing. Instead of letting the reference dictate what I could draw, I decided to pursue my ideals of beauty. Through this series, I felt liberated from the constraints of conventional figure drawing.



42" x 42", charcoal (all)

80" x 48", pastel

figure movement

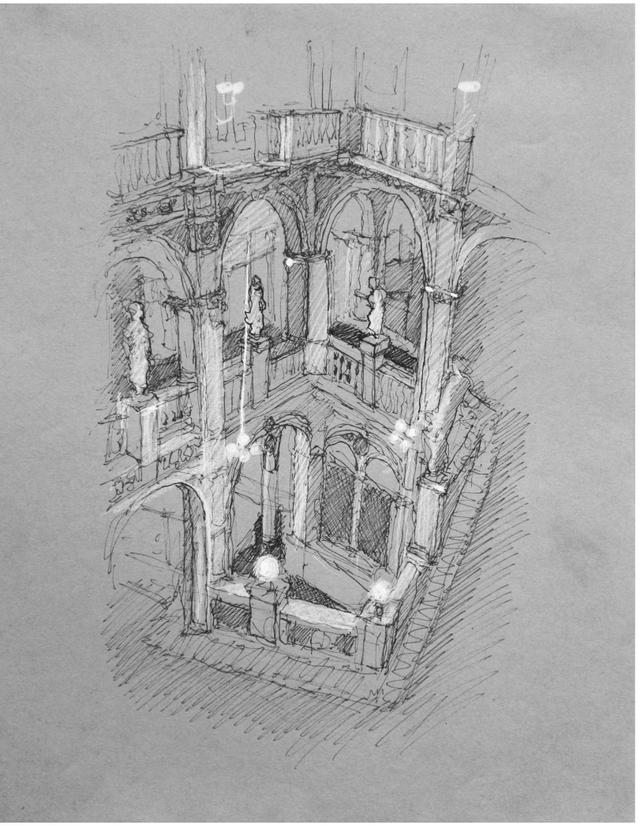
To communicate the movement of a body through space, I chose to use pastels because of their translucency and ability to smudge, creating spectral echoes of the figure.

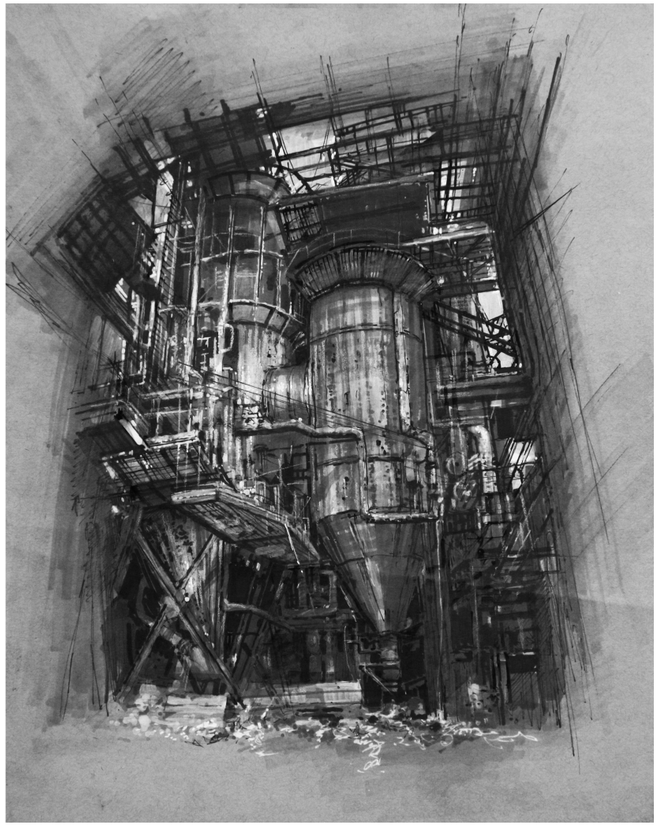
42” x 24”, pastel

fine arts

Tonal and compositional studies from reference images. With these drawings, I wanted to understand the textures of these objects, rather than copying them pixel for pixel. The end goal was to capture as much detail as possible but also not be weighed down by the reference images.

24” x 42”, charcoal





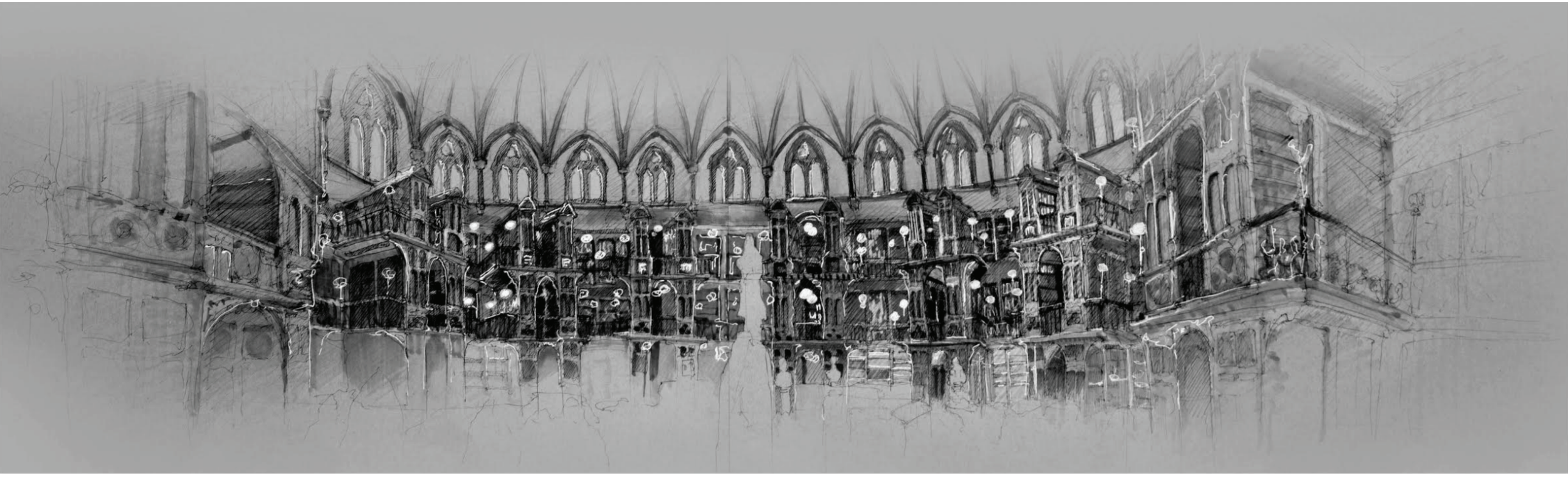
14" x 11", pen and marker

sketchbook selection

A collection of sketches found in my sketchbook. For these sketches, I wanted to distance myself from a habit of focusing too much on a single detail while doing live sketches. To do this, I used images taken from travels that I felt were compelling. These sketches were done with different time limits, 30 minutes, 40 minutes, and 2 hours respectively.

panoramic study

This image explores the idea of sketching in panoramic view and the distortion associated with it. This curved form is a result of stitching together multiple views. Instead of a mangled view of my own perception, the distortion brought about another side of the interior's beauty.



18" x 48", pen and marker

20" x 16" x 2", chipboard

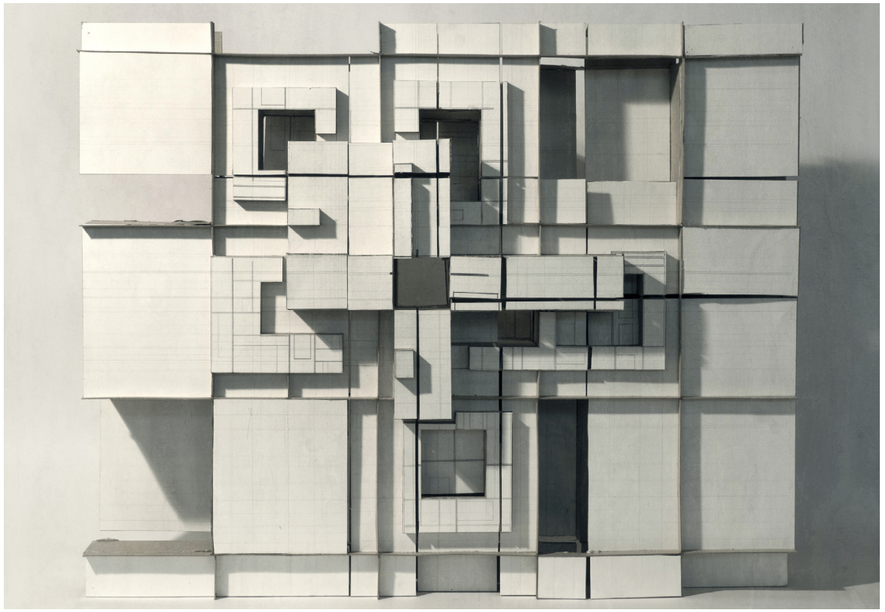
6" x 6" x 6", chipboard

cornell
summer program

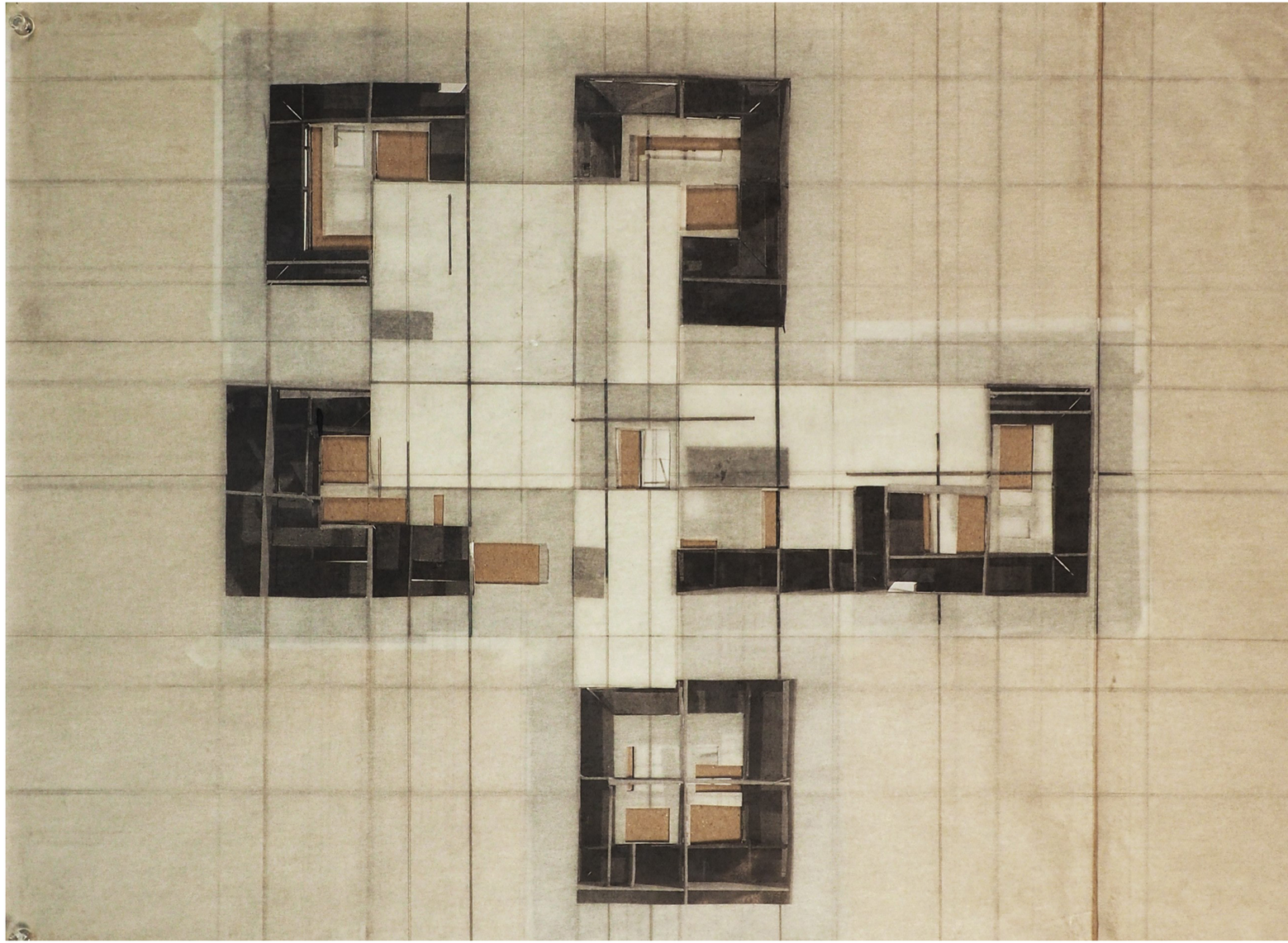
I interpret fragmentation as the breaking down of space. Within a system of organization, any disruptions of order suggest and amplify our sense of fragmentation. In my cubic space, I first introduced regulating planes, creating order. I then disrupted the alignment of these planes, fragmenting the volume of the cube and creating disorder in its density. When observing this effect on a planar surface, the differing heights of the extrusions suggested by their shadows divide the field into individual shapes of different proportions, creating breaks in vision.

alternate view of top left bar relief

For the second part of the Cornell summer program, I took six different views of my cube and laid them out together in a montage, extending the regulating planes outwards with construction line. I found that many of my lines connected, were on the same axis, or intersected to create new rectangles. I decided to make these new moments of order the focus of this work. Taking elements from my previous bar relief, I introduced narrow cuts into my model, creating a fragmented field.

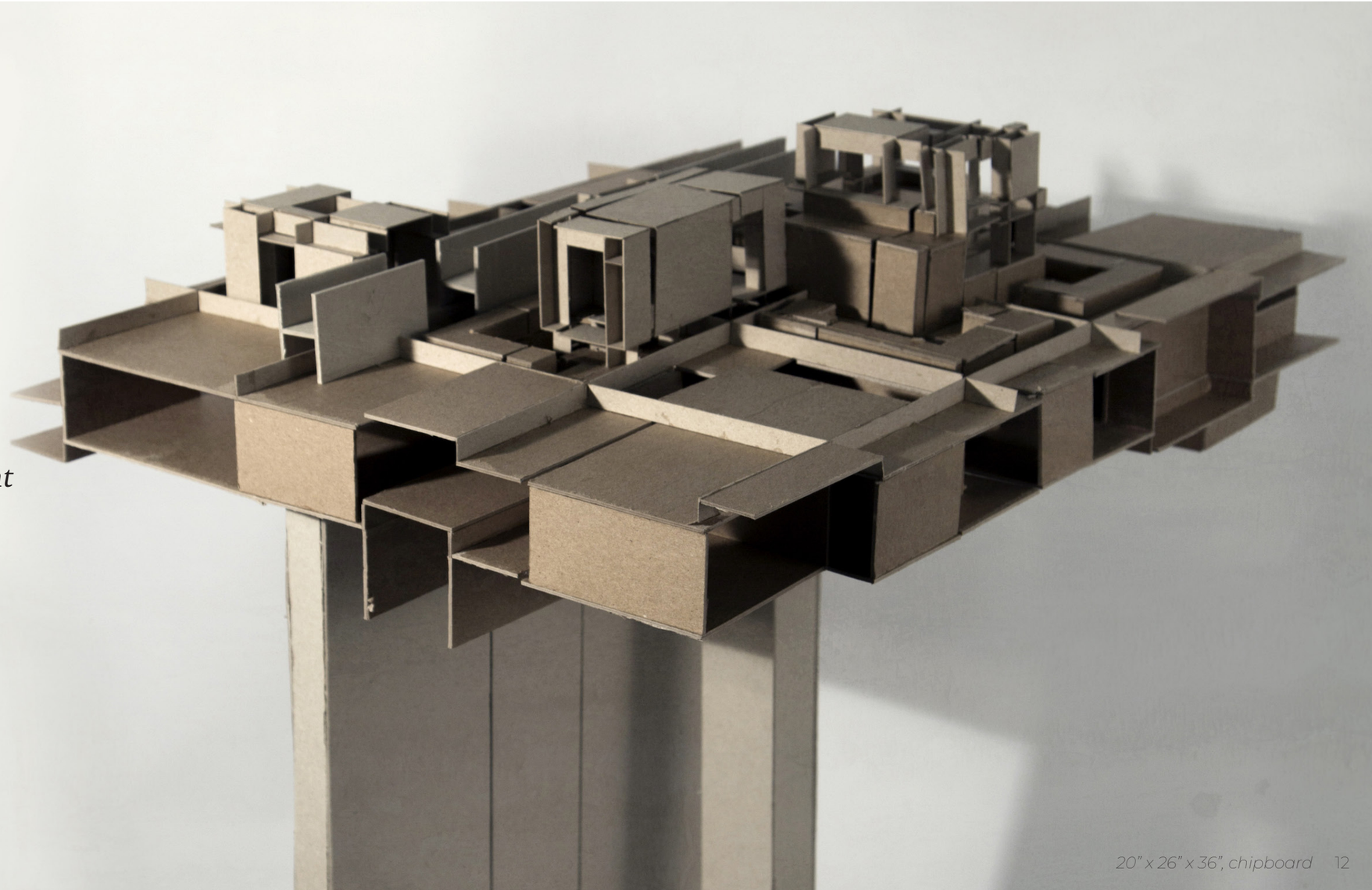


20" x 26" x 6", chip board, pencil on drawing paper

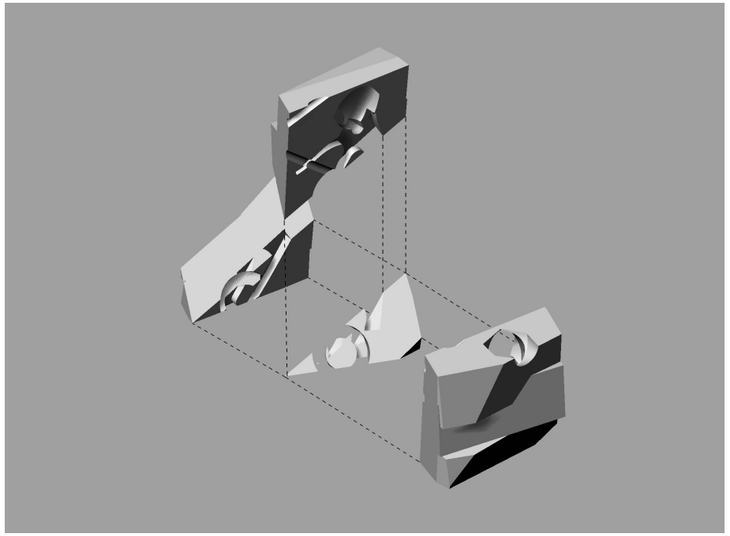


20" x 26", chipboard, pencil on trace

Derived on top of a barren and scarred garden, structures serve a lone scholar. Various densities of panels allow different evels of light to penetrate the space, personalizing each space for a specific function. Groundwater seeps into reservoirs that feed into narrow streams of water, cutting through the landscape. Depending on the time, water rises out of the slits, creating a surface that reflects the moonlight



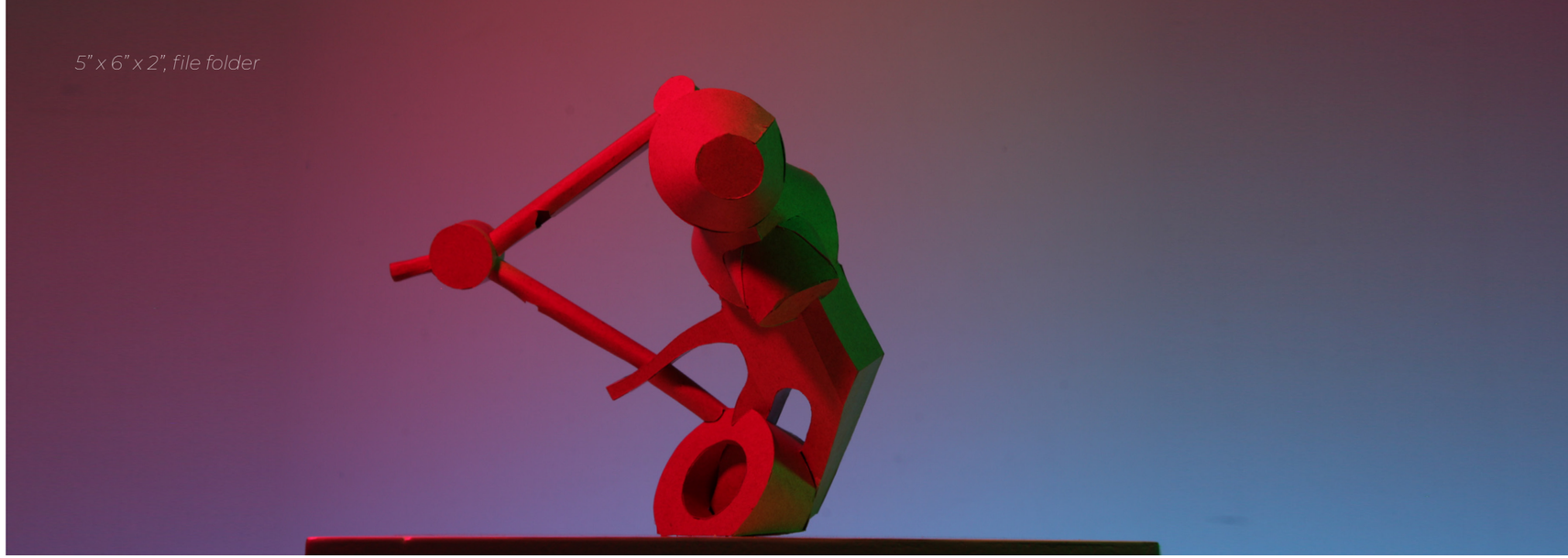
What if there's a different way to see, to analyze, and to engage with the world and its artifacts? How does such disengagement with familiarity result in new and unexpected forms? In the SCI-Arc summer intensive program, we explored the idea of "Woods in the Cabin." Typically viewed from the inside-out, the cabin is inversed with the woods, viewed from the outside-in.



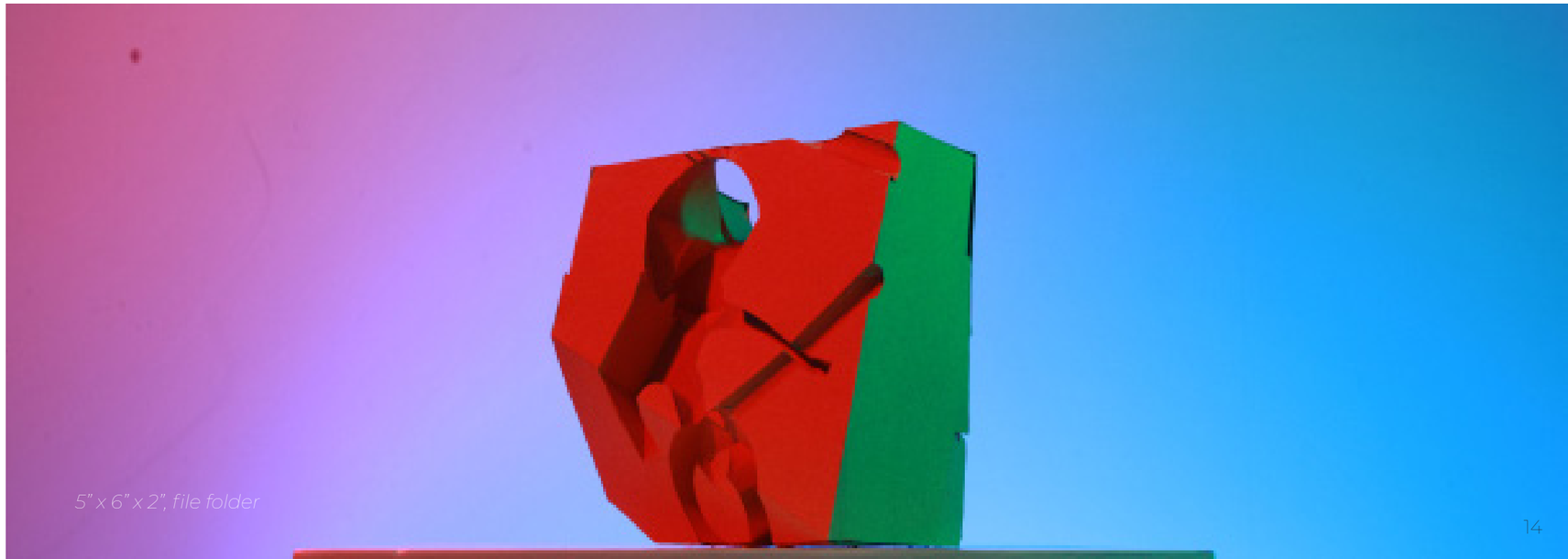
exploded isometric view showing interior space

inversed interior

Through intersecting and stacking objects, I created an exterior form. By taking my understanding of the positive and inverting it with the negative, I expose the hidden interior. I began visualizing these objects in relation to scale and gained new interpretations of the interiority of space.

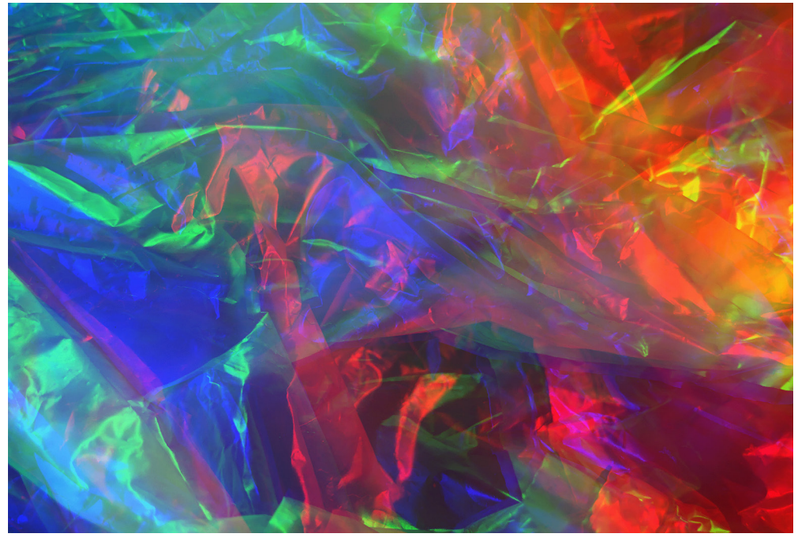


5" x 6" x 2", file folder

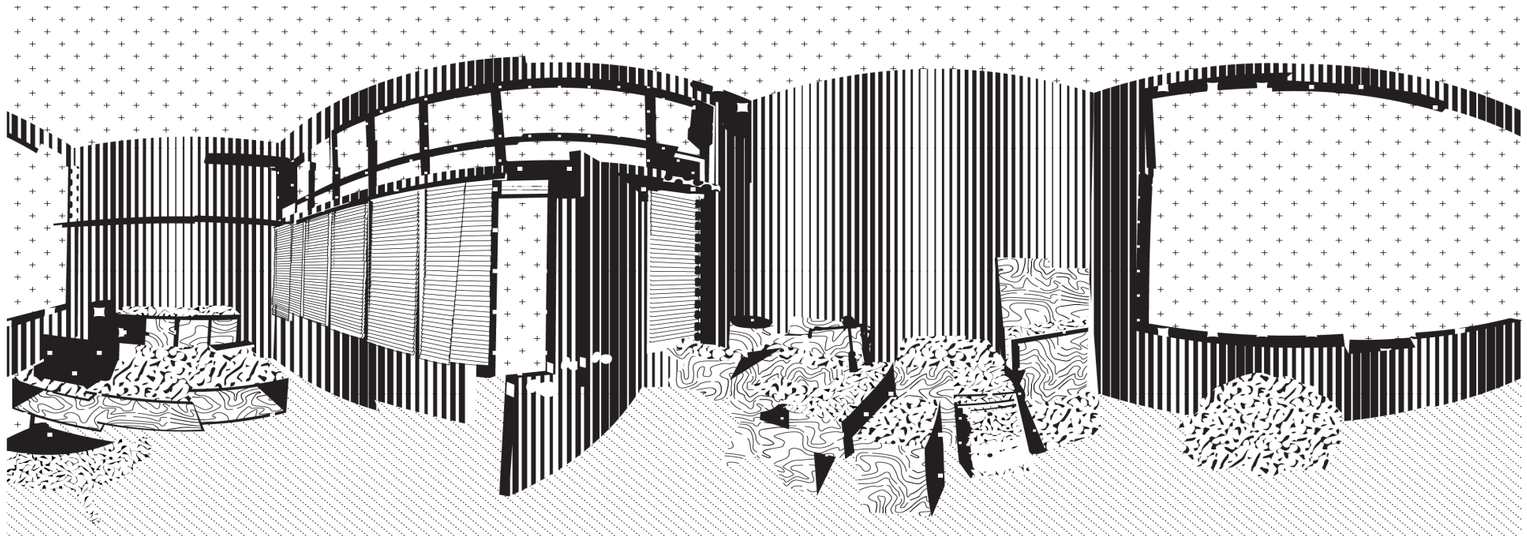


5" x 6" x 2", file folder

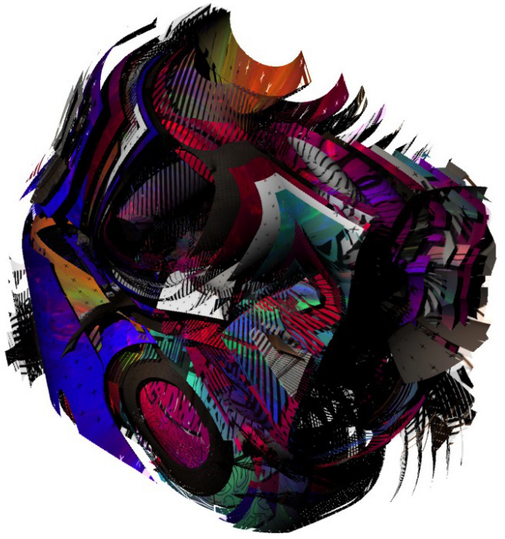
deconstructed panoramic view, linework



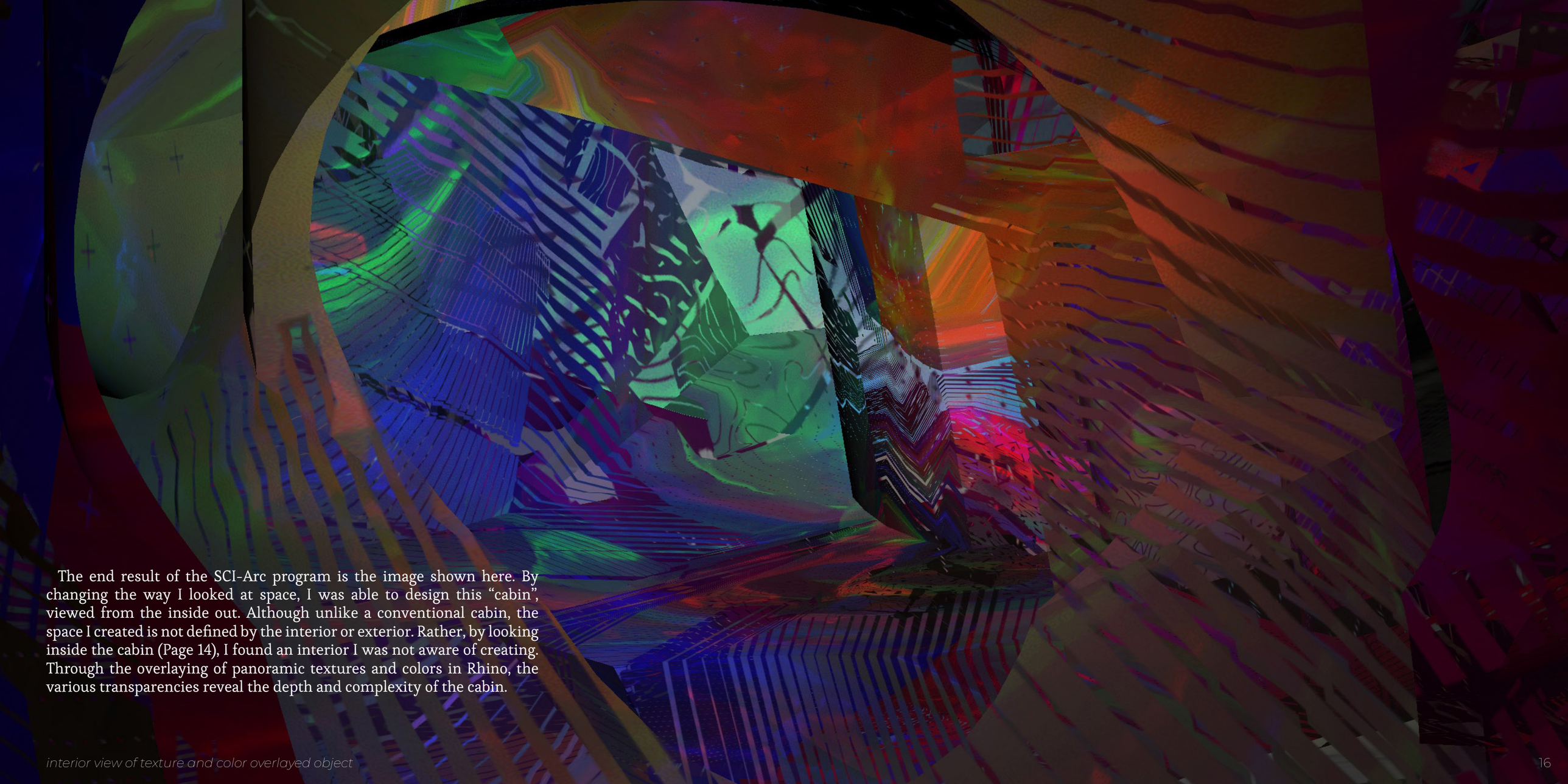
overlayed color profile, created in photoshop using an image of a platic bag



deconstructed panoramic view, textured



exterior view of texture and color overlayed object



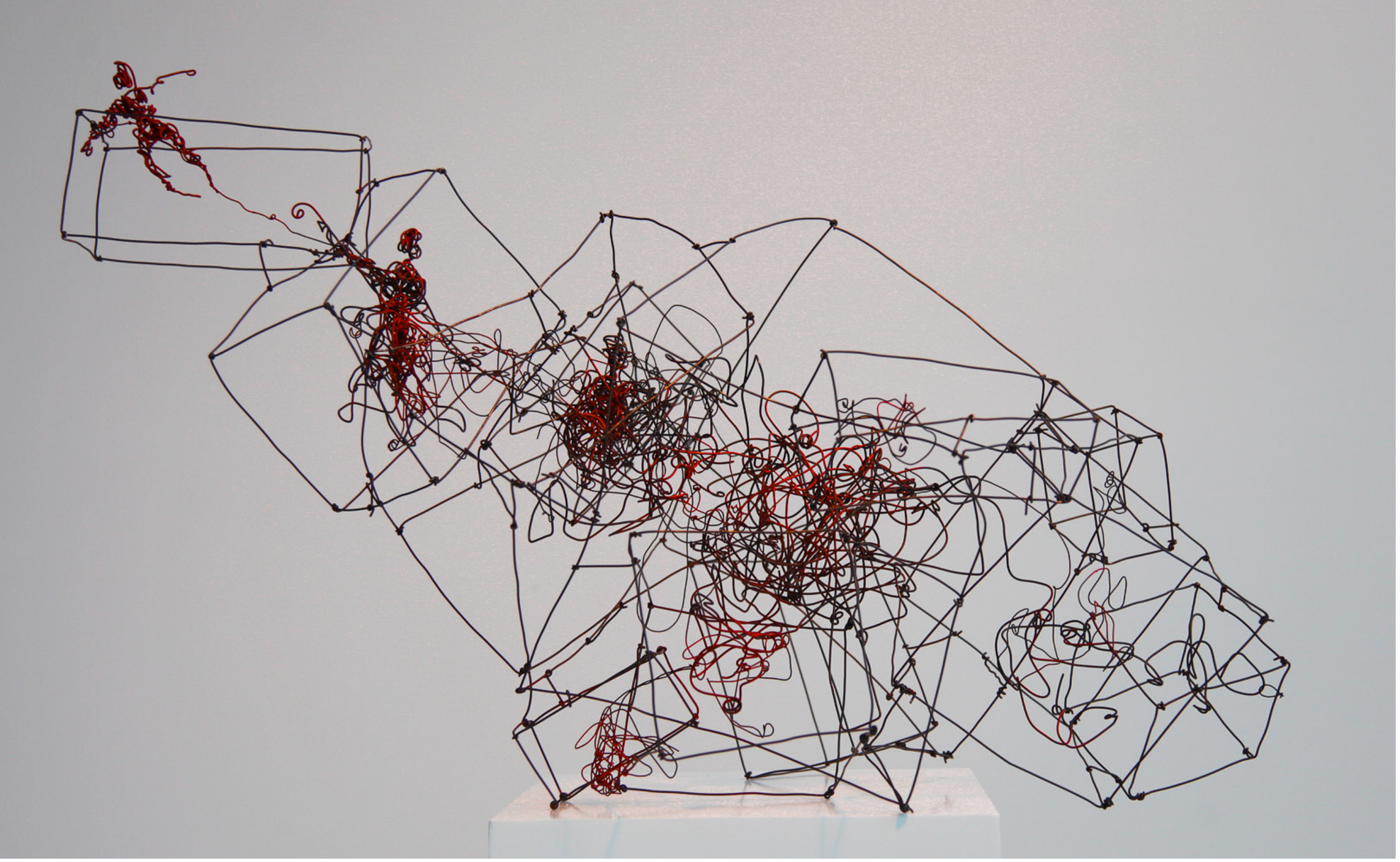
The end result of the SCI-Arc program is the image shown here. By changing the way I looked at space, I was able to design this “cabin”, viewed from the inside out. Although unlike a conventional cabin, the space I created is not defined by the interior or exterior. Rather, by looking inside the cabin (Page 14), I found an interior I was not aware of creating. Through the overlaying of panoramic textures and colors in Rhino, the various transparencies reveal the depth and complexity of the cabin.

interior view of texture and color overlayed object

tensile
installation

Voids are empty spaces that we often ignore. To bring such a neglected area to attention, an enticing object can occupy the space, altering our gaze into the void. The movement of this installation conforms to the space, stretching out its arms, pointing in directions of interest. As one follows the long finger to a slender end, their gaze drifts up in wonder.

16' x 12' x 10', fabric attached by fishing line



37" x 20" x 25", 16.5 guage rebar tie wire

existentialism

We are born into a state of confusion and entangled by constraints set by others that we must eventually shirk off. This sculpture is a physical manifestation of the process towards self-actualization. Relying on the rigid properties of wire, I created defined borders while expressing the entangled forms of the subject. The space in which the sculpture creates is molded by the moving figure, showcasing the shrinking boundaries until the figure emerges.

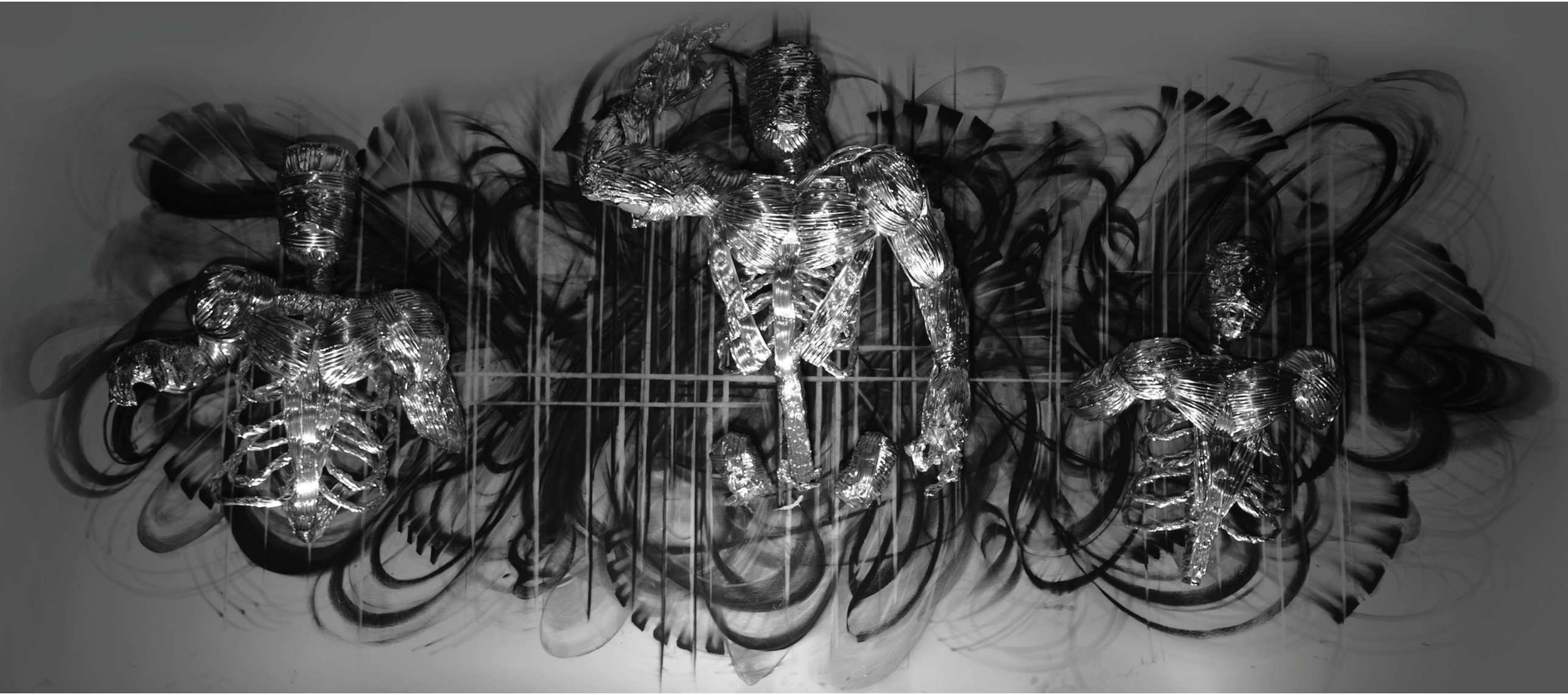
derived existentialism

Observing the cast shadows of my previous existentialism sculpture, I found the form to be reminiscent of my charcoal exploring similar ideas of entanglement (top and bottom right). As a derivative of those drawings, I created the third piece (bottom), a reflection on the cast shadows. My introduction of figures references the emergence from the entangled form.

42" x 80", charcoal (above)

42" x 24", charcoal (below)

80" x 144", charcoal



80" x 144" x 36", deconstructed ventilation duct, charcoal

68" x 56", charcoal, corrugated cardboard, paper mache, acrylic paint

amalgamachine

This piece showcases the mechanical integration of the human body. The orderly forms of the metallic sections contrast the organic texture of the figure. As these pieces of flesh are removed, the regulation underneath materializes. This idea of forged vs biological came to me as a result of doing material texture studies in preparation for this piece. I found the defined edges of metal to be vastly different to render compared to the soft skin texture of people.

long exposure shot of lamp cover adjustment (inverted)

personalized upcycling

Pursuing an idea of upcycling, I wanted to create a practical object using unwanted materials. The design was to be tailored for a specific person, in this case, my studio instructor. It would take advantage of the pipes, air vent covers and hanging light left over from the renovation of his home. Not only did this serve to clean up the cumbersome items, it also revitalized these valuable materials. By designing the reworked object to serve the specific needs of the components' owner, I ensured the item would be used.

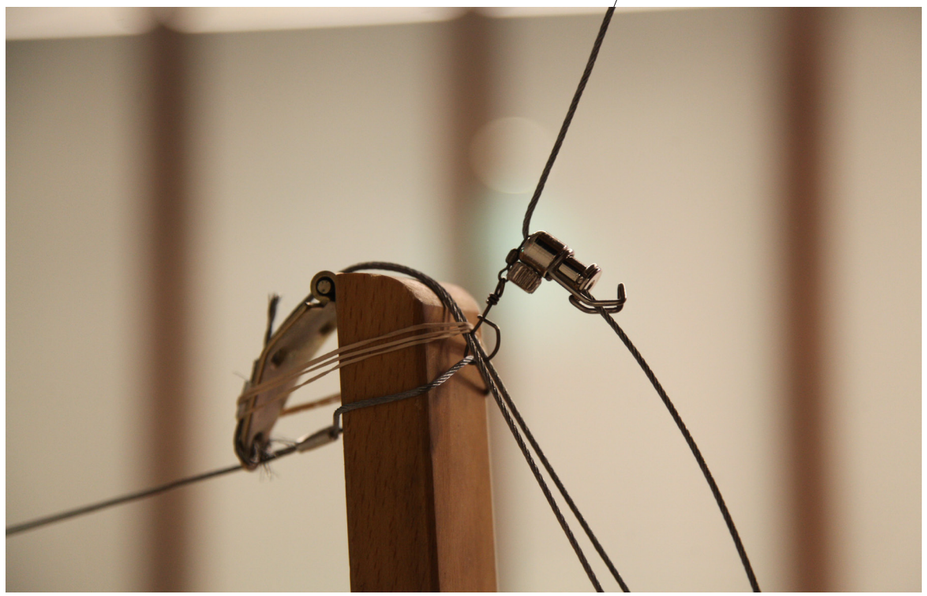
62" x 10" x 10", recycled material

The heights of the lamp cover were made adjustable, able to adapt to the needs of the user.

lamp cover in closed postion

lamp cover in open postion

counterbalance



counterbalance

Experimenting with using quick gestures to make charcoal marks on paper, I ended up with the drawing on the left. Re-evaluating this piece, I was inspired to explore the idea of balance. While balance is simple to achieve on a 2D surface, to consider balance three-dimensionally has a more interesting challenge - gravity. Using materials that I could easily bend and balance, I began to replicate the original charcoal drawing. I found a broken chair to use as the base in which I placed manipulated metal sheets to convey the idea of balance.

42" x 24", charcoal

balance within chair

2' x 3' x 4', broken easle connected by cable

1' x 3' x 5', chairs connected by cable

Reflecting on the broken chair piece ("counterbalance", previous page), I found that I could convey the idea of balance better when I presented the chair alone, rather than with added metal sheets. I identified other broken found objects around my studio to see how they might find balance. Not being able to manipulate the form of the object, I had to position the objects so that their forms would counterbalance the other. I further examined this notion by incorporating the sculpture onto a beam in my studio, discovering the threshold of equilibrium when hung.